

BEFORE THE POWER SITING BOARD OF THE STATE OF OHIO

**In the Matter of the Application of Black Fork Wind)
Energy, LLC for an Amendment to its Certificate to)
Install and Operate a Wind-Powered Electric) 14-1591-EL-BGA
Generation Facility in Crawford and Richland)
Counties, Ohio.)**

Members of the Board:

Chairman, Public Utilities Commission	Ohio House of Representatives
Director, Development Services Agency	Ohio Senate
Director, Department of Health	
Director, Department of Agriculture	
Director, Environmental Protection Agency	
Director, Department of Natural Resources	
Public Member	

To the Honorable Power Siting Board:

Please review the attached Staff Report of Investigation, which has been filed in accordance with the Board's rules. The amended application in this case is subject to an approval process as required by Section 4906.03 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Sincerely,



Patrick Donlon
Director, Rates and Analysis
Public Utilities Commission of Ohio

OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Case Number: 14-1591-EL-BGA
Project Name: Black Fork Wind Energy Project
Project Location: Crawford and Richland counties
Applicant: Black Fork Wind Energy, LLC
Application Filing Date: September 12, 2014
Inspection Dates: May 21, 2015
Report Date: August 13, 2015
Applicant's Waiver Requests: None
Staff Assigned: J. Pawley, M. Bellamy, A. Conway, G. Zeto, M. Butler

Application Description

Black Fork Wind Energy, LLC (Applicant) was authorized, in case number 10-2865-EL-BGN, to construct a wind farm facility with up to 91 wind turbines, with a maximum nameplate capacity of up to 200 megawatts (MW). The turbine types approved in the original certificate were the Vestas V100 (1.8 MW), the General Electric XLE 1.6-100 (1.6 MW), and the Siemens SWT 2.3-101 (2.3 MW) models.

In this application, the Applicant is proposing to add two new turbine models suitable for this project: the Vestas V110 (2.0 MW) turbine and the General Electric 2.3-107 (2.3 MW) turbine. The overall project nameplate capacity of 200 MW approved in the original case would not change. Likewise, the wind farm facilities would remain the same as certificated in the original case. In addition, the location of the project's associated facilities, including access roads, collector lines, substation, transmission line tie-in, concrete batch plant, and the operation and maintenance facility remains unchanged.

Basis of Application

The Applicant states that, since the filing of the original application in case number 10-2865-EL-BGN, on March 10, 2011, the Vestas V110 and GE 2.3-107 turbine models have become available on the market. The Applicant has determined that, given the wind characteristics at many of the intended turbine locations, these turbine models would result in increased productivity for the project.

The Applicant has provided an updated project schedule. The new schedule indicates that construction of the facility would commence in October 2016.

Application Review

Staff notes that the location of the facility components would not change as a result of this request. This addendum is intended only to add two new turbine models to the list of acceptable turbines for this project. As such, Staff's review for this report is solely focused on these two turbine models and whether adding them to the previously approved list of turbine models for the project would impact any of the stipulated conditions or result in an increase in adverse impacts as compared to the original project.

The Applicant is proposing to add the Vestas V110 turbine with either an 80 meter or 95 meter hub height, and the GE 2.3-107 turbine with either an 80 meter or 94 meter hub height, as suitable turbines for this project. Remaining consistent with the original application, the Applicant states that the 80 meter hub height is necessary at 14 turbine locations located near the Shelby Community Airport in order to comply with Federal Aviation Administration regulations.

Public Interaction and Participation

On September 12, 2014, the Applicant served copies of this application upon the local government officials, the planning commissions, and the local public libraries of communities affected by the proposed project. On September 22, 2014, the Applicant published notice of the application in the Mansfield News-Journal and the Bucyrus Telegraph-Forum, newspapers of general circulation in Richland and Crawford counties, respectively. The Applicant submitted proof of publication on October 6, 2014.

In November 2014, the Board received letters in support of the application from 10 project participants, one adjacent property owner, and one local business owner. These letters are included in the public comments section of the case record. As of this date, petitions for leave to intervene in this case have been filed by Mr. Gary Biglin, Ms. Karel Davis, Mr. Brett Heffner, Ms. Margaret Rietschlin, Mr. John Warrington, and the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation.

Setback Requirement

As established in the original certificate in case number 10-2865-EL-BGN, seven hundred fifty feet in horizontal distance from the tip of the turbine's nearest blade at ninety degrees to the exterior of the nearest, habitable, residential structure is the minimum distance a turbine is authorized to be located in proximity to a habitable structure on an adjacent property, without property owner approval. Likewise, as established in the original application, the property line setback is equal to a horizontal distance, from the turbine's base to the property line of the wind farm property, equal to one and one-tenth times the total height of the turbine structure as measured from its base to the tip of its highest blade. Staff finds that all of the approved turbines, as well as the turbines proposed in this case, are in compliance with these setback requirements.

Safety Manual

Staff reviewed the safety manuals for the GE 2.3-107 and Vestas V110 turbine models. Staff believes that the original conditions of the certificate, specifically conditions 38 through 42, adequately address safety considerations.

Conclusion

Upon review, the Application establishes that the turbine locations and other project facility components will not change with this application, and there would be no material increase in any socioeconomic or environmental impact of the facility. Further, by adding a turbine model with greater capacity, the number of turbines installed would not exceed the number of turbine locations or the 200 MW maximum nameplate capacity certificated by the Board in the original application. Staff believes, if either of the two new turbine models were selected, the original conditions of the certificate are adequate to ensure that adverse environmental impacts would continue to be minimized for this project.

Recommended Findings

Therefore, Staff recommends that the Board approve the Application, provided that the certificate continues to include the 80 conditions specified in the Opinion, Order, and Certificate for case number 10-2865-EL-BGN.

Recommended Condition

1. The Applicant shall continue to adhere to all conditions of the Opinion, Order, and Certificate for the Black Fork Wind Energy Project in case number 10-2865-EL-BGN, with the Vestas V110 and General Electric 2.3-107 turbines to be added as acceptable turbine types.

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Case No(s). 14-1591-EL-BGA

Summary: Staff Report of Investigation electronically filed by Mrs. Yvonne W Cooper on behalf of Staff of OPSB